

BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING FUTURE



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NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Dear Students,

In recognition of Women's History Month, we showcase the remarkable achievements of women both within our community and beyond in this edition of SoBA Snippets. This issue reflects the experiences and perspectives as a tribute to their steadfast commitment and profound influence across various domains.

Madam Sneha Parekh, Mentor of NMIMS SoBA, who embodies empowerment and self-love inspires women to pursue their intellectual growth and personal development without limitations. She is enriching learning pathways at SoBA by augmenting the physical and digital infrastructure.

The trajectory of Dr. Meena Chintamaneni, transitioning from lecturer to Pro-Vice Chancellor at SVKM'S NMIMS, is inspirational, and her leadership exemplifies her dedication to nurturing young minds and illuminating diverse paths for educational growth.

Empowerment through education extends beyond the classroom. SoBA students practiced their innovation and creativity at the recent excursion to Lonavala. Led by faculty members Mr. Rishabh Dwivedi and Dr. Neha Singh, the bootcamp provided an enriching platform for creative expression and camaraderie. Through immersive workshops and the creation of ad films, students explored the power of storytelling and collaboration, fostering a vibrant sense of community spirit.

Read about the entrepreneurial spirit of our students, Anshika Kushwaha and Chandni, through their initiative of Decoding Draupadi. Their endeavor supports working women and aims to translate digital advocacy into tangible impact, embodying the principles of empowerment and inclusivity.

Lastly, an article in this issue sheds light on the often-overlooked aspect of gender inequality: women's ownership of time. It emphasizes the necessity of reframing rest as a fundamental right for women, advocating for a society where they can exist without judgment or guilt.

As we continue to champion the contributions of women in education and beyond, let us draw inspiration from these extraordinary individuals and collectively strive towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

Warm regards,
Dr. Kiran Desai
Associate Dean, SoBA

Empowering Minds: Celebrating Women's Roles in Education

In recognition of Women's Day this March, we pay tribute to the remarkable contributions of women in education, spotlighting Dr. Meena Chintamaneni and Sneha Parekh Ma'am, who grace our cover page alongside our esteemed Associate Dean, Dr. Kiran Desai.

Madam Parekh, the guiding force behind our School of Branding and Advertising, embodies the spirit of guidance and support. Rooted in empowerment and self-love, her mentoring philosophy inspires students to embrace their unique abilities and chart their paths to success.

In her interview, Madam Parekh shared her perspective on mentoring and supporting students:

SS: How do you believe your experiences as a woman have shaped your approach to mentoring and supporting students?

A: I am an ardent fan of Oprah Winfrey & she once stated that "It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from. The ability to triumph begins with you always".

So I strongly follow this mantra & believe that one must celebrate yourself, love yourself & Don't do you, but Do for you. As a mentor I have been surrounded by many powerful and strong people, so instead of feeling intimidated by them, I feel it helps me grow. I'm pretty approachable for students when in need and always ready to help them in situations.

She also offered insights and advice for female students navigating challenges:

SS: Can you share any insights or advice for female students navigating challenges in their academic and career pursuits?

A: For all my female students who will be soon transitioning to being a women, just remember one thing we women are always multitasking to please our close and loved ones but in this process don't forget to do things for yourself. In order to please someone don't be different because that will suffocate you. Be yourself and the best will come out of you.

To succeed in your academics & future career just follow 2 rules-

Rule No. 1:- Never give up

Rule No. 2:- Always listen to rule no 1

To succeed I strongly believe in 3 S's-

SILENCE - It will help you listen better

STILLNESS - You can control everyone in the room

STRONG - You can face any circumstances or hurdles that come your way.

Dr. Meena Chintamaneni embarked on her educational journey nearly two decades ago as a Lecturer at Saraswati Vidyabhavan's College of Pharmacy, Mumbai University. Today, she stands as the Pro-Vice Chancellor of SVKM'S NMIMS, a testament to her unwavering dedication and passion for nurturing young minds.

In an interview, Dr. Chintamaneni shared insights into her approach to mentoring and supporting students:

SS: How do you believe your experiences as a woman have shaped your approach to mentoring and supporting students?

A: Women are multitaskers. They have an inbuilt aura to be a mentor. As a homemaker, she takes care and balances people with a variety of natures. So, building is a God-given nature. I have tried to implement this philosophy, and it has indeed given me results.

She also offered valuable advice for female students navigating challenges in their academic and career pursuits:

SS: Can you share any insights or advice for female students navigating challenges in their academic and career pursuits?

A: My only advice to female students is to never succumb to pressure and let your self-respect be hurt. Women are born

strong and emotionally more stable than others. This quality should be used as a shield against all odds. One who works with sincerity, dedication, and compassion doesn't have to worry about navigating challenges. Optimism is the key word for success. Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts."

As we celebrate these remarkable women, let's draw inspiration from their resilience, courage, and empowerment. Together, let's continue championing the invaluable contributions of women in education and beyond.

-Nimisha Ranade



DR. KIRAN DESAI- SHAPING THE FUTURE OF BRANDING AND ADVERTISING AT SOBA

Branding and Advertising is the realm where creativity meets strategy, so, it's only natural that strong leadership is necessary to shape the minds of future professionals. This month, SoBA Snippets is putting the spotlight on the women behind the machine, starting with the most senior ones.

Snippets had the opportunity to interview Dr Kiran Desai, the esteemed Dean of NMIMS School of Branding and Advertising (SoBA), on her perspective of the evolving landscape of Branding and Advertising. We also explored role SoBA plays in shaping industry-ready professionals and got to meet the woman behind the title.

SS: Could you share your journey in Branding and Advertising? What led you to this role?

Branding and Advertising excites me! In my opinion, the field is wider than pure sales or marketing. I have been closely associated with brand building in my roles in Mudra Communication, Grey Worldwide and other organisations.

Since my professional experience specialises in this field, this role was a natural fit between my skill sets and the need for leadership at NMIMS School of Branding and Advertising.

SS: Did you always want to go into education?

Not always, but early in my career, while at Mudra Communications, I had the opportunity to watch MICA's relevance to the Branding and Advertising industry. This experience inspired me to get into education.

SS: As the dean, are there any specific experiences or lessons from your career or lifetime that could be particularly valuable for students aspiring to excel in branding and advertising?

A skilled brand consultant often has a deep understanding of the marketing, consumer, and category landscape in their industry. They go beyond attention-arresting creative communication exercises to develop insights that lead to successful brands over the long term.

SS: In your experience, what key qualities do you believe contribute to success in branding and advertising?

The typical branding and advertising employee skill set has seen a shift- there is now a broader repertoire of skills needed to thrive in this industry. Along with the core skills mentioned earlier, analytical thinking, storytelling, data-driven decision-making, collaborative skills, and an innovative vision are necessary to succeed.



SS: What's something valuable you've learned during your career?

To be industry-relevant, you must always be receptive to learning new concepts and contexts and work to add something new to your skill set every year, no matter how old you are.

SS: Given the ever-changing landscape of Branding and Advertising, what role do you see the college playing in preparing students for emerging trends and challenges in the industry?

Your college will continue to update its curriculum with courses and content that mirror the latest trends, technologies, and industry-relevant skills. Experiential learning opportunities and out-of-class learning modules will continue to be part of the course delivery.

The comprehensive set of co-curricular and extracurricular activities aims to create confident and creative student personalities and a Branding and Advertising graduate with sound fundamentals.

SS: It feels only natural to ask- what next? Can you give us some insight into your plans for SoBA?

In one line, my long-term vision for SoBA is to prepare our students for lifelong learning.

SoBA must prepare its students to become thought leaders in Branding and Advertising. Therefore, emphasise research skills that can tap emerging trends through in-class learning, masterclasses, and skill enhancement workshops.

These modules will emphasise digital tools, data-driven decision-making, and other emergent needs of an industry-ready branding and advertising professional.

Most importantly, I envision SoBA as a cohort of creative communities that understand and translate marketing needs into great branding strategies and tactics.

Some quicker questions-

SS: What is a book you would recommend students read?

There isn't one book; there is a wide reading that must be done for perspective building. But if you must have just one, it is Atomic Habits by James Clear.



SS: If you eat at the canteen, what is your favourite order?



A well-made pav-bhaji is a favourite food anytime- with a nice tall glass of super-cool buttermilk.

SS: What is a hobby of yours that you think others will also enjoy or benefit from?

Reading all kinds of books helps make conversation, develop perspective and expand vision. I recommend keeping a book by your side. Or listening to audiobooks when travelling.



Dr Desai's deep insights and forward-thinking approach highlight the transformative power of education in Branding and Advertising. Under her guidance, SoBA emerges a hub of innovation, nurturing a generation of leaders ready to make their mark in Branding and Advertising with confidence and creativity.

—Akriti Shrivastava

From Classrooms to Cameras

Amidst all the events, classes and the chaos of college, the SYs finally had the chance to unwind.... a little. Under the guidance of Rishabh Sir, Neha Ma'am and the rest of the faculty, they embarked on a trip to Lonavala. Reaching college by 6 in the morning, playing songs and dancing in the buses, sharing snacks and sleeping, the trip there had it all.

But why did all this happen? Well, the SYs had the opportunity to shoot an ad film for whichever brand they wanted. Focusing on having an emotional aspect, everyone came up with various stories ranging from a group of friends to a James Bond copy. Separations to weddings, stories galore. You know what this showcases? It really speaks to the creative minds that are growing and cultivating here in SoBA, connecting so many different brands to so

many different themes and storylines and making them actually work.

Over the span of three days, throughout the hotel, you would find SYs shooting for their ads, rifling through their scripts, sorting their costumes, checking the angles, light levels and more, all to make sure they have the exact shot they want. There even was Rajesh Sir who provided groups to shoot with a drone.

But even with all this, it was a breath of fresh air for everyone, going out there and applying their creativity to the test and along with that, it was also a moment to calm down and just spend time with friends. The DJ Night surely helped a lot with that, having students all come down to the banquet hall and show their best moves. All in all, this was a trip that was a lot more fun and enlightening than expected.

-Vansh Jain



Celebrating WOMEN



The Women's Day event organized by the SRF committee was a grand success. The dress code for the event was traditional attire, and it was heartening to see SOBA's women dressed in beautiful ethnic outfits. The venue, 718, was decorated with vibrant colors and traditional elements, which added to the festive mood of the event.

The committee had arranged for music, polaroids, and delicious brownies to make the event more enjoyable. The highlight was the best-dressed awards, which recognized the efforts of the women who had put in extra effort to dress up for the occasion. Overall, it was a wonderful celebration of womanhood and a great way to honor and empower women.

-Twesha Chawla



SOBA KA HUA PARDAFAASH!

In the vibrant tapestry of SoBA's creative landscape, a spark ignited in the innovative minds of our students to build a community of individuals celebrating art, creativity and talent. It didn't take long for their dream to turn into reality with the birth of Parda, SoBA's very first international film festival.

To breathe life into their idea of 'Chote Kalakaar, Bada Parda', the team of Parda opened the curtains to unveil their inaugural pre event 'Pardafaash' on the 15th of March.

The hype around the event was increasing progressively as the big day finally arrived. With a spirited panel of guests such as Atul Mongia, Sagar Ballary and Suresh Vyas gracing the event, the corridor of the mini auditorium saw waves of students rushing to the seats at 2pm.

The event kicked off with glitz and glam with the dynamic host duo Aman Jain and Shlokka Shah delighting the audience with their captivating energy. The day advanced by revealing the geeks behind the rise of Parda, the date of the film festival, as well as screening a small trailer of the upcoming documentary series. An exciting conversation with the experienced panel followed, through which the audience got answers to all their doubts revolving around the world of cinema and filmmaking.

The highlight of the day was the giveaway of two passes to dunkfest 2.0, awarded to Urvika Lahoti for her exceptional performance as Gangubai.

The afternoon of cinematic revelations came to end with packets of popcorn being distributed to the attendees. Pardafaash was indeed a fun, electrifying affair that led to a lot of facts about the industry being uncovered by experts. Parda has only just begun, with a lot more events like these coming up soon!

It's splendid to see students taking up opportunities like these, raising the level of SoBA's events by the day.

-Ronit Singh

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P5 PLUS

P5 PLUS

P5 PLUS





**WORLD
WILDLIFE
DAY**

THROUGH THE
LENS



John Doe
Photography



John Doe
Photography



John Doe
Photography



INITIATIVES BY SRF

Discover how Saanjh, the community service club of SoBA, teamed up with "Change in Us" for a beach clean-up drive at Girgaon Chowpatty. Plus, dive into Red is the New Black's enlightening talk session with Dr. Anshumala Kulkarni on Endometriosis Awareness Month, empowering women with crucial knowledge.

Endometriosis

In recognition of Endometriosis Awareness Month, Red is the New Black hosted a talk session on 15th March'24 with Dr. Anshumala Kulkarni, a Gynecologist, Obstetrics, Robotic Surgeon, and Laparoscopic & Endometriosis Specialist with 17 years of experience at Kokilaben Hospital in Mumbai.

This informative session aimed to empower young women with self-examination techniques and early symptom recognition for Endometriosis, a disease often mistaken as severe period cramps. The attendees gained valuable insights and a chance to address their personal concerns.

This event, held in collaboration with Through the Lens, fostered awareness and education about this under-recognized women's health issue.

Beach Cleanup

Recently Saanjh, the community service club of SoBA came together for a greater good and conducted a beach clean up drive at the Girgaon Chowpatty in collaboration with "Change in Us" a community service organisation.

The members of the club showed enthusiasm for clean surroundings and collected a total of 350 kilograms of waste.

Decoding Draupadi

SS: Could you introduce yourself and your business?

AK: Hi! I am Anshika Kushwaha. I'm 21. I study Branding & Advertising. I love to write, design, skate, swim, paint - all on an excess coffee diet!
I run Decoding Draupadi with Chandni - my business partner.

Decoding Draupadi is a working woman's best friend. As a for-profit social enterprise, we build content assets and services that help women progress at work. We have been at it for the last 2 years and getting closer to our PMF. We currently have four pieces.

Content:

Ideas and information on all things that matter to working women - health, career, upskilling - On LinkedIn, Insta and YouTube.

Community: Empowering women in creative fields through a thriving community of 500+ members, providing workshops, flexible work opportunities, and career resources.

Platform:

Draupadi on the Dais - a database of women leaders for inclusive leadership discussions and speaking opportunities.

Services:

We offer marketing services to select clients (if and only if the clients are mission-oriented and are working to solve women's issues).

SS: What inspired you to start this business?

AK: I famously claim to be a kid raised on the Internet. The Internet has taught me tons about gender equality, body image, right vs wrong, feminism, self-identity and more. However, I have always been a clicktivist - you know, liking and sharing posts, following people, retweeting, etc in the name of advocacy.

Now, that's not bad, of course. But as a young person, armed with ideas, time and energy, I knew I could do more. Move real-world things to help create a more equitable society.

And thus, Decoding Draupadi

SS: Your social media is filled with posts about spreading awareness about challenges faced by women and building a community for those who face them. Why do you think a sense of belonging is so important?



AK: Finding safe spaces is important for everyone. It is where you truly thrive.

But work places are Big Girl arenas. Safe spaces for women – in the form of representation, mentorship, upskilling, access to opportunities, permission to make mistakes and learn – are not built into corporate structures by default.

This lack of communities for working women – to seek guidance, to seek answers, to simply just share problems – is often a setback in their careers. And you don't want to leave 48.41% of the population short-handed for solvable reasons like lack of policy intervention, access to right information, affordable upskilling, etc.

SS: We all know that change takes time but what is the first step we can take to further this cause?

AK: You're right, change takes time, but there are many first steps you can take to contribute to women's empowerment!

Here are a few options depending on your resources and interests:

- **Educate Yourself:** Dive into the challenges women face globally or in your community. Check out credible sources like the UN or Lean In to learn more!
- **Challenge Biases:** Reflect on your biases. When you think of a successful person, was it automatically a man? Be aware of unconscious biases and actively challenge them. Speak up against sexist remarks and play devil's advocate when needed.

- **Support Women-Led Initiatives:** Seek out businesses, organizations, or campaigns led by women and show your support through patronage or volunteering. And hey, if you're free over the summer, we're always looking for collaborators at DD ;)
- **Amplify Women's Voices:** Share content from female creators, nominate them for opportunities, and encourage others to listen to their perspectives.
- **Empower the Girls in Your Life:** Mentor young girls, whether they're your college juniors or others in your community. Help them find opportunities and connect them with the right people. Just be a helpful presence to those around you – it's a great way to start making a difference!

SS: What is the biggest advice you can give to women of SOBA?

AK: Great question!

Let me reframe it to what piece of advice I give myself everyday:

Don't go through life looking for reasons you do not belong. You might find them. Worse, you might even believe them.

-Shreya Sharma



Growing up, I have never seen a rested woman.

Conversations about gender inequality often roar with statistics on income gaps, property ownership, and voting rights. Yet, a critical piece of the puzzle remains largely invisible: the ownership of a woman's time.

Downtime, leisure – these aren't merely absences of activity, but permissions to exist outside the constant hum of duty. But for many women, this permission becomes a foreign concept. Imagine a world where relaxation is a privilege, not a basic right. This is the reality for countless women burdened by the unspoken expectation to be perpetually "on."

The game of time becomes a subtle battleground, fought with societal norms and ingrained expectations. Men, more often, are granted the freedom to "loiter" – to wander markets aimlessly or linger at cafes. This seemingly insignificant act becomes a symbol of a deeper truth: the permission to simply be.

Women, on the other hand, rarely enjoy this luxury. Their time spent in public spaces is often seen as purposeful, a means to an end – "Women don't go to the market to relax, they go there to get things done." A woman's time is inherently borrowed, a resource to be maximized, never truly her own.

This relentless pressure to be productive bleeds into every space. At home, the weight of domestic responsibilities – cooking, cleaning, child-rearing – creates a never-ending to-do list. And more so with work. In fact, I often think about how women do not take breaks for themselves. It is either a break from work to manage homes. Or from their homes to crush it at work.

And all tiny moments of leisure are tinged with guilt, a constant battle between relaxation and the nagging voice that whispers, "Shouldn't you be doing something?"



The consequences of this stolen time are profound. It creates a generation of women who are perpetually on edge, unable to fully disconnect and recharge. It fosters a disconnect from their own desires and needs, replaced by the constant hum of societal expectations.

But what if we reframed the narrative? What if rest wasn't a reward, but a right? Imagine a world where women could indulge in "mindless fun" without guilt. Picture a society where women in public spaces aren't judged by their purpose but simply allowed to exist. When women are granted the space to simply be, they become more present, more creative, and more resilient.

So, the next time you see a woman "doing nothing," resist the urge to judge. Recognize it for what it might be – a stolen moment of rest, a rare permission to exist outside the relentless demands of her world. Let's work towards a future where this stolen moment becomes a birthright, not a luxury. Let's create a world where women, like men, are simply allowed to be.

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